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Map of Mississippi showing the percentage of the population aged 65 and over by county. The map is color-coded by age group: 10% and over (darkest), 9% to 10% (dark), 8% to 9% (medium), 7% to 8% (light), and 6% to 7% (lightest). Each county is labeled with its name and the corresponding percentage.

County	Percentage
Benton	2.7
Carroll	6.1
Boone	6.8
Marion	6.1
Baxter	6.1
Fulton	5.9
Randolph	9.8
Clay	9.6
Washington	2.9
Madison	3.4
Newton	7.4
Sevier	7.1
Stone	6.7
Izard	6.3
Sharp	7.7
Lawrence	10.4
Greene	6.2
Mississippi	11.5
Crawford	5.5
Franklin	4.2
Johnson	5.2
Pope	4.8
Van Buren	7.4
Cleburne	5.2
Independence	6.4
Polk	9.9
Pointsett	8.4
Cross	10.5
St. Francis	10.8
Crittenden	8.0
Sebastian	4.4
Logan	5.2
Yell	4.8
White	6.4
Woodruff	13.4
Lee	12.7
Monroe	8.1
Phillips	11.2
Scott	4.4
Perry	7.6
Faulkner	5.0
Prairie	5.4
Polaski	4.9
Lenoir	4.3
Garland	5.8
Saline	4.2
Hot Spring	6.7
Grant	6.6
Jefferson	8.3
Arkansas	5.9
Howard	5.6
Pike	5.0
Sevier	3.7
Dallas	14.6
Cleveland	8.6
Lincoln	6.5
Desha	10.9
Chicot	11.4
Bradley	10.1
Cathoun	10.5
Union	7.6
Ashley	11.3
Miller	4.1
Columbia	5.9
Lafayette	5.6
Clayton	4.8
Blount	5.5
Nevada	5.1
Ouachita	7.9

Labor Market Trends is a publication of the Bureau of Labor Statistics Programs Section of the Arkansas Workforce Investment Board. This newsletter is published in cooperation with the Bureau of Labor Statistics, United States Department of Labor.

- Unemployment rates dropped in 70 of Arkansas' 75 counties from February to March. Four counties posted higher rates, while the jobless rate in Pulaski County was 4.9 percent for both months.
- Four counties had rates below 4.0 percent. The lowest rate was 2.7 percent and it was posted in Benton County. Dallas County had an unemployment rate of 14.6 percent, for Arkansas' highest rate in March.

Additional county statistics are available from the Arkansas Workforce Investment Board in the monthly publication,
Labor Market Information for Arkansas Counties.

Continued on page 2



North American Industry Classification	March 04	February 04	March 03
Total Nonfarm	1,143,800	1,136,400	1,140,400
Goods Producing	259,000	258,200	263,900
Natural Resources & Mining	6,700	6,700	6,600
Mining	3,600	3,500	3,500
Construction	48,900	47,800	49,500
Construction of Buildings	11,200	10,800	11,200
Heavy & Civil Engineering Construction	9,700	9,600	10,500
Specialty Trade Contractors	28,000	27,400	27,800
Manufacturing	203,400	203,700	207,800
Durable Goods	107,200	107,400	110,900
Wood Products	13,900	14,000	14,000
Primary Metals	8,000	8,000	8,200
Fabricated Metals	17,500	17,600	17,800
Machinery	14,200	14,300	14,900
Computer & Electronic Products	6,000	6,000	6,000
Electrical Equipment	12,900	12,900	13,100
Transportation Equipment	15,700	15,700	15,900
Furniture & Related Products	8,000	7,900	9,000
Miscellaneous Manufacturing	6,600	6,700	7,200
Nondurable Goods	96,200	96,300	96,900
Food	52,900	52,800	52,200
Paper & Printing	17,100	17,200	17,300
Plastics & Rubber Products	13,300	13,300	13,600
Service Providing	884,800	878,200	876,500
Trade, Transportation, & Utilities	238,400	237,400	236,700
Wholesale Trade	44,300	43,900	44,400
Retail Trade	128,800	127,600	126,800
Motor Vehicle & Parts Dealers	17,800	17,500	17,200
General Merchandise Stores	35,000	34,600	33,700
Department Stores	10,200	10,200	10,400
Transportation, Warehouse, & Utilities	65,300	65,900	65,500
Utilities	6,700	6,700	6,700
Transportation & Warehousing	58,600	59,200	58,800
Truck Transportation	34,600	34,600	33,600
Warehousing & Storage	10,200	10,200	9,800
Information	20,100	20,000	20,100
Publishing Industries	6,300	6,200	6,300
Telecommunications	8,700	8,700	8,700
Financial Activities	50,400	50,200	49,600
Finance & Insurance	37,900	37,800	37,200
Real Estate & Rental & Leasing	12,500	12,400	12,400
Professional & Business Services	102,300	100,900	102,000
Professional, Scientific, & Technical	30,900	31,000	31,200
Management of Companies	23,800	23,800	23,200
Administrative & Support Services	47,600	46,100	47,600
Employment Services	21,400	20,400	21,800
Education & Health Services	142,700	141,800	139,600
Educational Services	12,600	12,400	12,600
Health Care & Social Assistance	130,100	129,400	127,000
Ambulatory Health Care	39,400	39,200	38,000
Hospitals	42,400	42,300	41,300
Nursing & Residential Care Facilities	25,400	25,300	25,300
Social Assistance	22,900	22,600	22,400
Leisure & Hospitality	87,500	85,200	86,600
Arts, Entertainment, & Recreation	8,500	8,200	8,400
Accommodation & Food Services	79,000	77,000	78,200
Accommodation Services	10,600	10,100	10,100
Food Services	68,400	66,900	68,100
Other Services	40,500	40,200	40,500
Automotive Repair	7,300	7,200	7,300
Government	202,900	202,500	201,400
Federal Government	20,900	20,900	20,800
State Government	67,900	67,700	67,700
Local Government	114,100	113,900	112,900

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Nonfarm - *Continued from Page 1*

Over the year, nonfarm payroll employment in Arkansas advanced 3,400. Service providing industries gained 8,300 jobs, while goods producing industries lost 4,900.

Employment in **education and health services** rose 3,100 over the year. Health care and social assistance facilities accounted for the growth.

Jobs in **trade, transportation and utilities** were up 1,700. Employment gains in trade were partially offset by losses in transportation and warehousing.

Government, which includes federal, state and local agencies, as well as educational facilities, has added 1,500 positions since March 2003. Eighty percent of this growth was traced to local government.

Compared to the previous year, employment in **leisure and hospitality** advanced 900. Hiring in the accommodations and food services segment accounted for most of the gain.

Led by advances at finance and insurance companies, the number of workers in the **financial activities** sector rose 800 over the year.

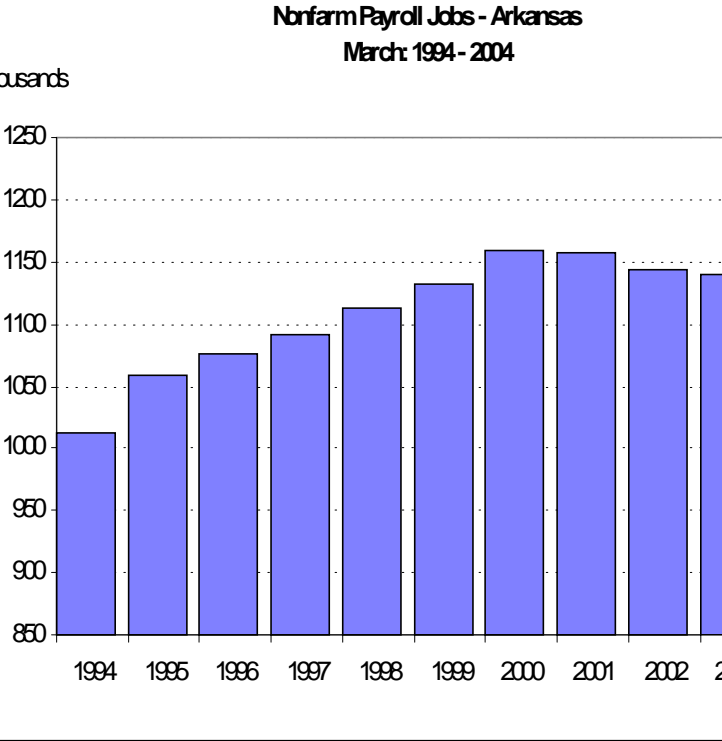
Employment in the **professional and business services** sector was up 300 over the year. The “management of companies” category accounted for the growth.

Jobholders in the **natural resources and mining** sector rose 100.

Manufacturing industries have lost 4,400 (-2.1 percent) jobs since March 2003, following the downward trend seen nationwide. Durable goods accounted for 3,700 of this loss and nondurable goods made up 700. The largest loss (-1,000) was in the furniture and related products industry.

Construction employment fell by 600 positions. “Heavy and civil engineering construction” losses (-800) more than offset additions in “specialty trade contractors” (+200). The decline in heavy construction was traced to the completion of large construction projects.

The number of **other services** and **information** jobs remained at 40,500 and 20,100, respectively.



Consumer Price Index for the United States: March 2004					
1982-1984=100 Base					
	Percent Change Since:				
	Mar. 04	Feb. 04	Mar. 03	Feb. 04	Mar. 03
All Urban Consumers	187.4	186.2	184.2	+ 0.6	+ 1.7
Urban Wage Earners & Clerical Workers	182.9	181.9	180.3	+ 0.5	+ 1.4

Source: U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Hours & Earnings of Production Workers in Manufacturing Industries - State of Arkansas									
NAICS Industry	Average Weekly Earnings			Average Weekly Hours			Average Hourly Earnings		
	Mar. 2004	Feb. 2004	Mar. 2003	Mar. 2004	Feb. 2004	Mar. 2003	Mar. 2004	Feb. 2004	Mar. 2003
Manufacturing	\$531.28	\$529.93	\$535.28	39.5	39.4	39.1	\$13.45	\$13.45	\$13.69
Durable Goods	566.77	560.74	527.01	41.4	40.9	39.3	13.69	13.71	13.41
Wood Products	597.18	607.33	561.07	43.4	42.8	44.6	13.76	14.19	12.58
Fabricated Metals	575.87	565.01	579.77	40.9	40.1	40.8	14.08	14.09	14.21
Nondurable Goods	493.50	498.76	543.59	37.5	37.9	38.8	13.16	13.16	14.01
Food	374.98	373.89	443.87	36.3	36.3	38.1	10.33	10.30	11.65

Technical Notes

“Labor Market Trends” is prepared monthly in conjunction with the U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS). The current month's estimates are preliminary, while all previous data are subject to revision.

Estimates of nonfarm payroll jobs show the number of jobs by industry and reflect employment by place of work.

Hours and earnings estimates are based on payroll and worker-hour data collected for production workers in manufacturing industries.

Industries are classified according to the North American Industry Classification System.

All estimates are based on a first quarter 2003 benchmark.

Explanation of Terms and Concepts

Monthly Business Survey of Employers - A monthly sample survey designed to provide industry information on nonfarm payroll jobs. Data are compiled each month from mail questionnaires and telephone interviews by the Arkansas Workforce Investment Board in cooperation with BLS. The data are based on establishment records and include all workers, full- or part-time, who received pay during the payroll period which includes the 12th of the month. Approximately 4,000 business establishments are included in the Arkansas survey.

Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) - A term applied by the U.S. Office of Management and Budget to counties that have one or more central cities and that meet specified criteria of population density, commuting patterns and social and economic integration.

Current Population Survey (CPS)- A monthly sample survey of the population 16 years of age and over, designed to provide data on the labor force, the employed and the unemployed. The survey is conducted each month by the Bureau of the Census for BLS. The information is col-

lected by trained interviewers from a sample of about 50,000 households. The data collected are based on the activity reported for the calendar week including the 12th of the month. A total of 871 Arkansas households are represented in the sample survey.

Civilian Labor Force - The sum of all employed and unemployed persons 16 years of age or older. Members of the Armed Forces are excluded.

Employment - An estimate of the number of persons who worked any time for pay or profit or worked 15 hours or more as unpaid workers in a family business during the calendar week which includes the 12th of the month. Also included are those who, although not working, had some job attachment and were not looking for work, and persons involved in labor management disputes.

Unemployment - An estimate of the number of persons who did not have a job, but were available for work and actively seeking work during the calendar week which includes the 12th of the month.

Unemployment Rate - The number of unemployed as a percentage of the civilian labor force.

Seasonal Adjustment - A statistical technique applied to monthly data to eliminate changes that normally occur during the year due to such seasonal events as changes in the weather, major holidays, shifts in production schedules, harvest times, and the opening and closing of schools.

Consumer Price Index (CPI) - A measure of the average change in prices over time of a fixed market basket of goods and services. It is based on prices of food, clothing, shelter, fuels, transportation fares, and other items that people buy for day-to-day living. The CPI shown in this publication represents the U.S. city average and is not seasonally adjusted. There is no separate consumer price index for Arkansas.

Labor Force Statistics

Arkansas (Seasonally Adjusted)	March 2004	February 2004	March 2003
Civilian Labor Force	1,310,700	1,310,600	1,268,000
Employment	1,239,600	1,238,700	1,193,400
Unemployment	71,100	71,900	74,600
Rate	5.4	5.5	5.9
Arkansas (Not Seasonally Adjusted)			
Civilian Labor Force	1,308,100	1,296,900	1,265,500
Employment	1,233,300	1,216,300	1,187,100
Unemployment	74,800	80,600	78,400
Rate	5.7	6.2	6.2
Fayetteville-Springdale-Rogers			
Civilian Labor Force	177,425	175,400	166,275
Employment	172,425	169,875	161,500
Unemployment	5,000	5,525	4,775
Rate	2.8	3.1	2.9
Fort Smith			
Civilian Labor Force	101,600	100,725	98,500
Employment	96,600	95,325	92,925
Unemployment	5,000	5,400	5,575
Rate	4.9	5.3	5.6
Jonesboro			
Civilian Labor Force	46,050	45,775	44,225
Employment	43,575	43,050	42,025
Unemployment	2,475	2,725	2,200
Rate	5.4	5.9	5.0
Little Rock-North Little Rock			
Civilian Labor Force	321,250	317,125	308,075
Employment	305,975	301,700	292,950
Unemployment	15,275	15,425	15,125
Rate	4.8	4.9	4.9
Pine Bluff			
Civilian Labor Force	38,075	37,550	36,350
Employment	34,925	34,250	32,900
Unemployment	3,150	3,300	3,450
Rate	8.3	8.8	9.5
United States Unemployment Rates:			
Seasonally Adjusted	5.7	5.6	5.8
Not Seasonally Adjusted	6.0	6.0	6.2

Note: MSA data are not seasonally adjusted.



Pine Bluff Metropolitan Statistical Area

Nonfarm Employment Rises 200

Total nonfarm payroll jobs for the Pine Bluff MSA posted a small gain between February and March. Two major industry groups – manufacturing and leisure-hospitality added 100 jobs each.

Over the year, a gain of 600 was posted in the nonfarm sector. Three of ten major groups noted employment advances. Manufacturing jobs, up 400, had the largest increase. This addition was followed by gains of 100, each, in trade-transportation-utilities and leisure-hospitality.

North American Industry Classification	Mar. 04	Feb. 04	Mar. 03
Total Nonfarm	36,200	36,000	35,600
Goods Producing	8,200	8,100	7,800
Natural Resources & Construction	900	900	900
Manufacturing	7,300	7,200	6,900
Nondurable Goods	4,600	4,500	4,400
Service Providing	28,000	27,900	27,800
Trade, Transportation, & Utilities	6,400	6,400	6,300
Wholesale Trade	1,000	1,000	1,000
Retail Trade	4,100	4,100	4,000
Transportation, Warehouse, & Utilities	1,300	1,300	1,300
Information	200	200	200
Financial Activities	1,300	1,300	1,300
Professional & Business Services	2,300	2,300	2,300
Education & Health Services	5,500	5,500	5,500
Leisure & Hospitality	2,300	2,200	2,200
Other Services	1,400	1,400	1,400
Government	8,600	8,600	8,600
Federal Government	1,800	1,800	1,700
State Government	3,200	3,200	3,300
Local Government	3,600	3,600	3,600

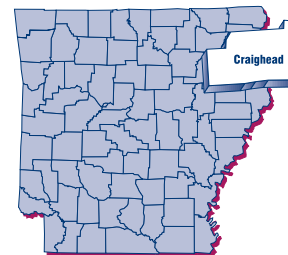
Jonesboro Metropolitan Statistical Area

Nonfarm Payroll Jobs Total Increases in March

The total number of nonfarm payroll jobs increased in the Jonesboro MSA during March by 600, reversing the downward movement that occurred between January and February. March increases were posted in manufacturing, leisure-hospitality, and government. Job totals in the other seven groups were unchanged.

The year-to-year employment picture for the MSA showed nonfarm totals fluctuated in four major groups, while the other six held at year-ago levels. Trade-transportation-utilities and leisure-hospitality had minor increases (100, each) while professional-business and education-health services had offsetting decreases. Overall, the Jonesboro MSA has had relatively stable employment numbers.

North American Industry Classification	Mar. 04	Feb. 04	Mar. 03
Total Nonfarm	41,100	40,500	41,100
Construction & Mining	1,900	1,900	1,900
Manufacturing	7,600	7,500	7,600
Trade, Transportation & Utilities	7,800	7,800	7,700
Information	700	700	700
Financial Activities	1,500	1,500	1,500
Professional & Business Services	3,100	3,100	3,200
Education & Health Services	6,500	6,500	6,600
Leisure & Hospitality	3,800	3,600	3,700
Other Services	1,500	1,500	1,500
Government	6,700	6,400	6,700



Fayetteville - Springdale - Rogers Metropolitan Statistical Area



North American Industry Classification	Mar. 04	Feb. 04	Mar. 03
Total Nonfarm	174,300	173,700	170,100
Goods Producing	37,700	37,700	37,700
Natural Resources, Mining, & Construction	7,800	7,800	7,400
Manufacturing	29,900	29,900	30,300
Durable Goods	12,500	12,500	12,800
Fabricated Metals	3,600	3,600	3,600
Nondurable Goods	17,400	17,400	17,500
Food	12,300	12,300	12,600
Service Providing	136,600	136,000	132,400
Trade, Transportation, & Utilities	43,000	42,800	41,400
Wholesale Trade	8,000	7,900	7,300
Retail Trade	17,900	17,700	17,100
General Merchandise Stores	5,000	4,900	5,100
Transportation, Warehouse, & Utilities	17,100	17,200	17,000
Information	2,300	2,300	2,200
Financial Activities	6,700	6,700	6,400
Professional & Business Services	26,900	26,900	26,700
Employment Services	3,200	3,200	3,400
Education & Health Services	16,100	16,000	15,300
Hospitals	4,700	4,700	4,600
Leisure & Hospitality	13,600	13,400	13,200
Other Services	4,800	4,800	4,700
Government	23,200	23,100	22,500
Federal Government	1,900	1,900	1,800
State Government	8,700	8,600	8,500
Local Government	12,600	12,600	12,200

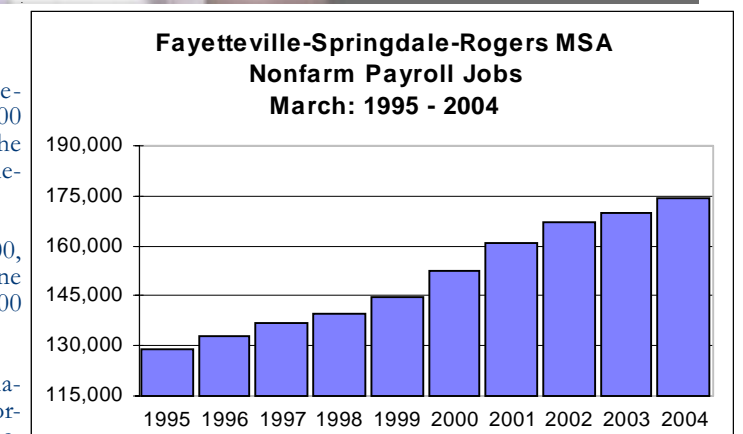
Nonfarm Jobs Total 174,300 in March

Nonfarm employment in the Fayetteville-Springdale-Rogers MSA rose 600 to total 174,300 in March. Four major sectors added jobs over the month. The largest increase was 200 in both trade-transportation-utilities, and leisure-hospitality.

Over the year, nonfarm payroll jobs added 4,200, for a growth rate of 2.5 percent. Gains in nine major sectors were partly offset by a drop of 400 in the manufacturing sector.

Yearly advances ranged from 100 in both information and other services to 1,600 in trade, transportation, and utilities. Most of the gain in trade, transportation, and utilities was posted in trade, with retail trade adding 800 and wholesale trade gaining 700.

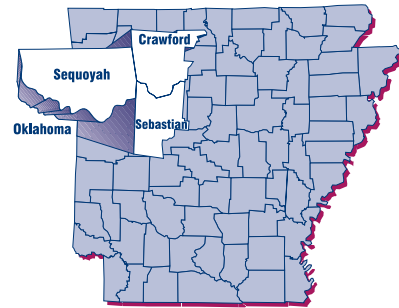
Since March 1995, nonfarm payroll jobs have increased 45,400 from 128,900. This is a gain of 35 percent in nine years.



Hours and Earnings of Production Workers in Manufacturing Industries

	Mar. 04	Feb. 04	Mar. 03
Average Weekly Earnings	\$535.30	\$523.25	\$532.54
Average Weekly Hours	40.8	39.7	39.1
Average Hourly Earnings	\$13.12	\$13.18	\$13.62

Fort Smith Metropolitan Statistical Area



March Job Count Up 400

Total nonfarm payroll jobs for the Fort Smith MSA increased 400, from 98,700 in February 2004 to 99,100 in March 2004. The leisure and hospitality sector recorded job growth of 200. Education-health services and other services accounted for increases of 100 each. Job totals for the other major sectors were flat for the month.

Nonfarm jobs decreased 300 from March 2003 to March 2004. The drop occurred as a result of major industry losses totaling 1,100 in professional-business services, education-health services, information, and trade-transportation-utilities. Significant losses at employment agencies accounted for a reduction of 500 in employment services (professional and business category) over the year. Combined gains of 800 in four major groups were not strong enough to produce a year-to-year increase.

Nonfarm Payroll Jobs

North American Industry Classification	Mar. 04	Feb. 04	Mar. 03
Total Nonfarm	99,100	98,700	99,400
Goods Producing	31,200	31,200	30,500
Natural Resources & Mining	1,000	1,000	900
Construction	4,600	4,600	4,300
Manufacturing	25,600	25,600	25,300
Durable Goods	14,700	14,700	14,900
Electrical Equipment	6,100	6,100	5,900
Nondurable Goods	10,900	10,900	10,400
Food	7,500	7,600	6,900
Service Providing	67,900	67,500	68,900
Trade, Transportation, & Utilities	19,600	19,600	19,700
Wholesale Trade	3,200	3,200	3,200
Retail Trade	10,800	10,800	11,000
General Merchandise Stores	3,500	3,400	3,500
Transportation, Warehouse, & Utilities	5,600	5,600	5,500
Truck Transportation	4,100	4,100	4,000
Information	1,500	1,500	1,700
Financial Activities	3,600	3,600	3,600
Professional & Business Services	9,000	9,000	9,400
Employment Services	3,600	3,700	4,100
Education & Health Services	12,600	12,500	13,000
Health Care & Social Assistance	12,300	12,300	12,400
Hospitals	4,400	4,400	4,800
Leisure & Hospitality	7,200	7,000	7,100
Other Services	2,800	2,700	2,800
Government	11,600	11,600	11,600
Federal Government	1,200	1,200	1,300
State Government	2,000	2,000	1,900
Local Government	8,400	8,400	8,400

Hours & Earnings of Production Workers

Manufacturing Industries

	March 04	February 04	March 03
Average Weekly Earnings	\$517.05	\$512.26	\$555.10
Average Weekly Hours	38.3	38.4	38.9
Average Hourly Earnings	\$13.50	\$13.34	\$14.27

Little Rock - North Little Rock Metropolitan Statistical Area



Nonfarm Payroll Jobs

North American Industry Classification

	Mar. 04	Feb. 04	Mar. 03
Total Nonfarm	315,400	314,500	316,300
Goods Producing	40,400	40,500	41,800
Natural Resources, Mining, & Construction	16,500	16,400	16,700
Special Trade Contractors	9,400	9,300	9,500
Manufacturing	23,900	24,100	25,100
Durable Goods	14,600	14,700	15,500
Fabricated Metals	2,900	3,000	3,100
Computer & Electronic Equipment	2,300	2,300	2,200
Transportation Equipment	3,300	3,300	3,400
Nondurable Goods	9,300	9,400	9,600
Service Providing	275,000	274,000	274,500
Trade, Transportation, & Utilities	65,400	65,700	66,600
Wholesale Trade	15,700	15,800	15,800
Retail Trade	33,800	33,600	33,700
Food & Beverage Stores	4,500	4,600	4,600
General Merchandise Stores	8,300	8,100	7,500
Transportation, Warehouse, & Utilities	15,900	16,300	17,100
Information	9,300	9,200	9,300
Telecommunications	5,000	5,100	5,100
Financial Activities	19,700	19,700	19,000
Professional & Business Services	39,100	38,600	39,500
Computer Systems	4,900	5,000	5,100
Employment Services	8,400	8,000	8,400
Education & Health Services	40,900	40,700	40,400
Hospitals	12,800	12,700	12,600
Leisure & Hospitality	24,600	24,300	24,100
Food Services	18,600	18,300	18,800
Other Services	12,000	11,800	12,100
Government	64,000	64,000	63,500
Federal Government	9,300	9,300	9,300
State Government	29,600	29,600	29,300
Local Government	25,100	25,100	24,900

Nonfarm Count Picks Up 900

Nonfarm payroll jobs rose to 315,400 in the Little Rock-North Little Rock MSA in March. Advances totaling 1,000 in the service providing industries sparked the addition. An increase of 500 in professional and business services represented the largest gain over the month. Leisure and hospitality employment rose 300.

Goods producing jobs declined 100 in March. Manufacturing losses outpaced gains in natural resources, mining and construction.

A net decline of 900 was posted in the MSA's nonfarm sector over the year. Manufacturing layoffs were responsible for 1,200 job losses. Trade, transportation and utilities, also down 1,200, played a large part in the year-to-year downturn. Four major industries added at least 500 jobs each, but the gains were not great enough to offset the manufacturing and transportation cutbacks.

Hours and Earnings of Production Workers

Manufacturing Industries

Durable Goods Industries

	Mar. 04	Feb. 04	Mar. 03	Mar. 04	Feb. 04	Mar. 03
Average Weekly Earnings	\$624.02	\$592.88	\$570.96	\$655.08	\$618.49	\$563.17
Average Weekly Hours	44.1	42.9	40.9	46.1	44.4	39.3
Average Hourly Earnings	\$14.15	\$13.82	\$13.96	\$14.21	\$13.93	\$14.33